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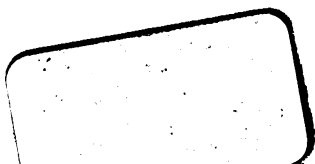
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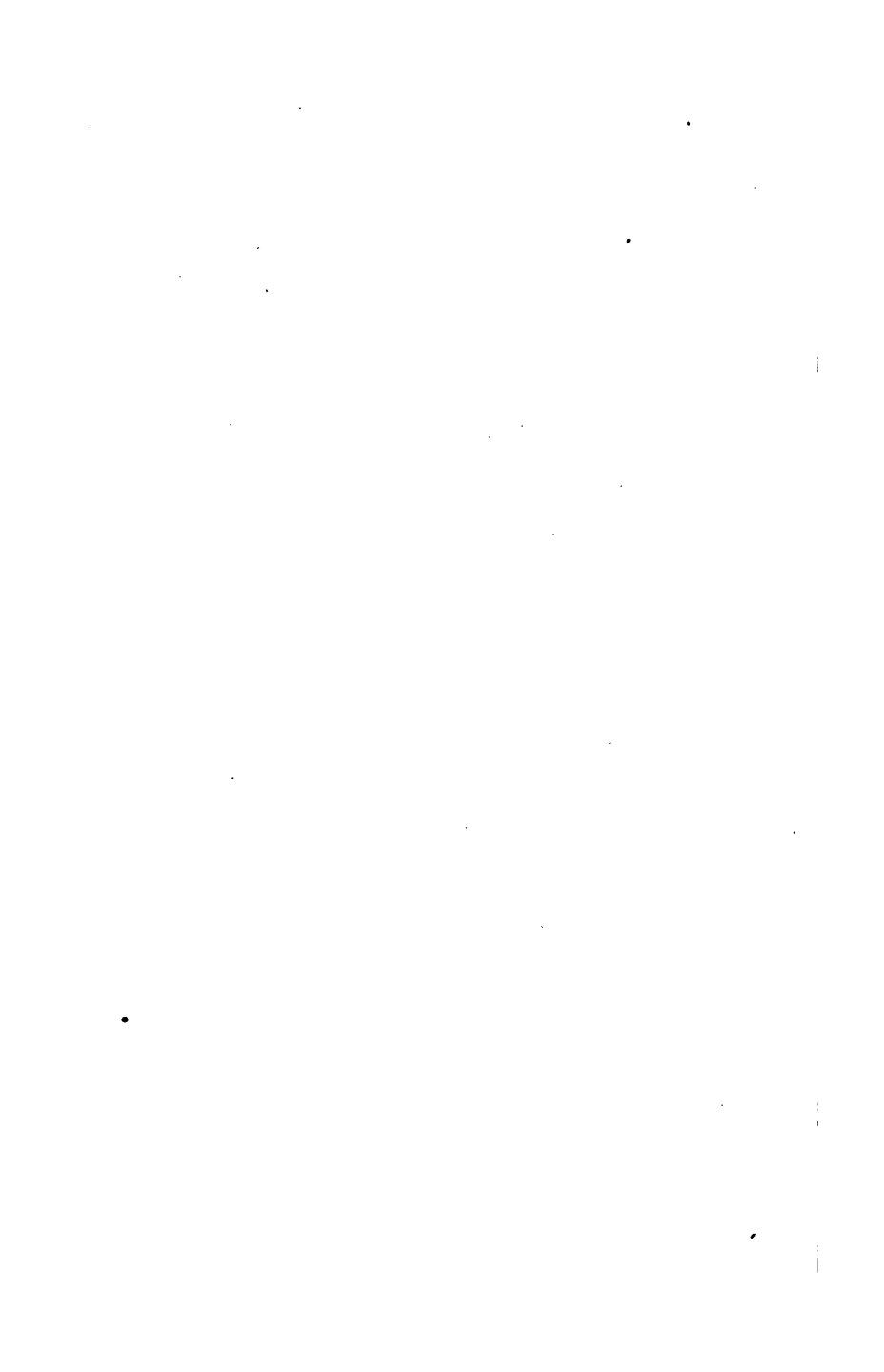
AN
ESSAY
ON
PUNCTUATION
WITH INCIDENTAL
REMARKS ON COMPOSITION.

BY F. FRANCILLON,
SOLICITOR.

"Etiam cum iudicium meum ostendero, suum tamen legentibus
relinquam."—*Quintilian*.

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PREFACE.

Pars minima et orationis fragmentum [the smallest part and fragment of a sentence]; this is the translation which *Schrevelius*, in his *Lexicon*, gives of the Greek word *Comma*, and this is the source from which the present Essay has taken its rise. Meeting accidentally with the above passage, upon it I founded a paper, which I read to some of my fellow-members of the Banbury Mechanics' Institute :—afterwards, when others of us volunteered to give a series of lectures, fortnightly, during a winter season, I chose Punctuation as my theme.

My attention thus drawn to the subject, I have not, in my reading, passed unnoticed whatever occurred bearing on the subject; and further, I have searched out every work which my time and my abode, could place within my reach, at all likely to help me to a just conclusion.

If any one thinks that, in so small a work, I have been too profuse in my quotations or citations of authorities, let him remember that I have studied in a profession in which it is the pride of its writers to bring forward auth-

orities and precedents for what they say; in the assurance that, while they thereby add authority to their works, they do not diminish their own reputations either as lawyers or men of general learning. For myself, I add, that while I am proud to bring forward the authority of eminent Rhetoricians and Grammarians for much which I have asserted, I have not shrunk from citing any one, because what he has published may be brought to bear against a single proposition in the Essay, original or derivative. Besides, if any of the learned should honour my work with a consideration, the quotations and citations may afford them some small help in forming an opinion on the subject, or if they shall be minded to refer to the originals, may serve them as an index.

While for the loan of books and assistance in other ways, I confess myself indebted to many men, I cannot refrain mentioning by name my friend William Bigg of Banbury, who, having read my work in manuscript, and the proof sheets before passing through the press, has suggested many additions and omissions, which I have felt it right to adopt.

NEITHROP, BANBURY, October, 1842.

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AN ESSAY ON PUNCTUATION.

POINTING or PUNCTUATION is the art of placing, in a written or printed work, certain points, marks, notes, or signs; whereby the author hopes to make his sentences more easily to be understood by *his* readers and *their* hearers; and consequently more correctly to convey his ideas to them. Perhaps there is no department in literature, so generally attempted to be practised, and so generally presumed to be of utility, of which so little knowledge is to be acquired from books, ancient or modern, as Punctuation.

It is proposed to treat the subject in four sections;—
1st, the practice of the art of Punctuation before the invention of the art of printing;
2ndly, Its history in the early stages of the art of printing and its progress to the present time;
3rdly, The period, colon, semi-colon, comma, parenthe-

sis, and interrogation, and their several points; also of the interjection and its note, sometimes called the note of admiration, and the point or mark first called the break and now the dash;

4thly, The general conclusion.

Before entering on the first section of this essay, one of the principal propositions intended to be maintained, will be stated; it is this, that the several parts of a composition are not formed by the points, which commonly bear the names of periods, colons, semi-colons, commas, parentheses, and interrogations; the office of these points being only to point out to the eye of the reader, the periods and members and fragments, whose names they bear. The distinction between periods, members, and fragments, and their points is not a new one: Gerard J. Vossius says, that Grammarians look to periods, colons, and commas, as the means of *good* pointing; but Rhetoricians, in order to render their compositions pleasing and perspicuous.¹ In the article Punctuation, in the Introduction to English Grammar, Bishop Lowth drew the distinction between periods, members, and fragments, and their points, as follows;—

“The several degrees of Connexion between Sentences, and between their principal constructive parts, Rhetoricians have considered under the following distinctions, as the most obvious and remarkable: the Period, Colon, Semicolon, and Comma.

“The Period is the whole Sentence, complete in itself, wanting nothing to make a full and perfect sense, and not connected in construction with a subsequent Sentence.

“The Colon, or Member, is a chief constructive part, or greater division, of a Sentence. The Semicolon, or

Half-member, is a less constructive part, or subdivision, of a Sentence or Member.

"A Sentence or Member is again subdivided into Commas, or Segments; which are the least constructive parts of a Sentence or Member, in this way of considering it; for the next subdivision would be the resolution of it into Phrases and Words.

"The Grammarians have followed this division of the Rhetoricians, and have appropriated to each of these distinctions its mark, or Point; which takes its name from the part of the Sentence, which it is employed to distinguish; as follows;—The Period [.]; the Colon [:]; the Semicolon [;]; and the Comma [,]." Campbell is another authority for the distinction between periods, members, and fragments, and their points: in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric* he quotes, for another purpose, the following sentence; "For as, if any of those had then been condemned, you would not now have transgressed; so if you should now be condemned, others will not hereafter transgress;" but he adds; "the sentence is a perfect period, consisting of two members, each of which is subdivided into two clauses."³

SECTION THE FIRST.

The History of Pointing before the invention of the Art of Printing.

To the Grecian writers of the highest antiquity, points were unknown; but nevertheless, that a complex period was considered by them, to be divided into several members, is an undisputed fact.

When points were first invented is not a settled question : the full point is found in inscriptions, of a date four hundred years before the Christian era; and is said to have been inserted in manuscripts of the Scriptures, as early as the fourth century; certainly it is to be found in those of the seventh.

The learned German, Augustus Matthæi, in his Greek Grammar, says, that it was not until the great influx of strangers to Alexandria, had impaired the purity of the Greek language, that the art of pointing became an object with the learned. Matthæi further states that Aristophanes of Byzantium, the Grammarian, who was born about the year 240, invented three marks, by which to distinguish the divisions of a discourse:—upon the authority of the Port Royal Latin Grammar, and from what is further stated by Matthæi, it appears that his statement, that there were three marks is too large : in fact there was only one mark, a *point*, serving three different offices; each office being distinguished by the situation of the point;—for instance, if the position of the point was over the last letter of a word, it performed the part of our full-point, and denoted the end of a period or complete close of the sentence;—if placed in or at the middle of a letter, it served for our colon-point, perhaps also for our semi-colon-point, and denoted that the proposition was only partly finished, that another member, beginning with a pronoun or conjunction was necessary or about to be added, and from its position it was by the Latins termed *media distinctio*;—if placed at the bottom of the last letter of a word, from its position it was by the Latins called *subdistinctio*, and denoted that the sense was altogether incomplete or suspended. Afterwards, when pointing came into more

general use, to denote a period, the point was removed from the top to the bottom of the word,—to denote a colon, the point bearing the form of our colon-point was adopted,—and a point, bearing somewhat of the form of the comma-point, was used to denote a comma;—these last three points are found in some of the oldest manuscripts now extant. Grammarians do not all agree upon the uses of a single point, in the manner above set forth:—Gaza says, and Vergara was of the same opinion, that if the ancients put the point to the middle of the last letter, it made their complete sentence; and if they put it to the top, it was their middle sentence; that is their colon:—Vossius, in his small grammar, also gives a different version of the matter; saying, that the point at the middle of the final letter signified the comma;—at the top it was the colon;—and at the bottom the period; but herein the author of the Port Royal Latin Grammar seems to think Vossius was mistaken.⁴ In manuscripts of the ninth century, a note of interrogation, bearing somewhat of the form of our semi-colon-point, was added.

The Greek, in which the New Testament was first written, was not pure Greek, such as was written by Plato, Aristotle, and other eminent Greek authors; but it was interspersed with many peculiarities, belonging to the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac Tongues: the Hebrew or Chaldee and Syriac being, at the earliest age of Christianity, spoken in common by the Jews of Palestine. Many biblical critics have contended, that points were in use before the time of the Apostles: on the other hand, as many others contend, that their use did not come in until after that time:—whether points were used or not in the manuscripts of the Scriptures, the

doubts of the Fathers of the Church, how particular passages should be read and understood, gives reason to believe that there was not, in the fourth century, an accustomed system of pointing; it is known, that in that century the Septuagint was not pointed, and thence, it may be inferred, that the New Testament was in a like case.

Saint Jerome, who was born A. D. 340, and died at the age of 80, translated the Books of the Old and New Testaments into Latin; which version is known by the name of the Vulgate:—he, it is said, attended to the pointing of the Scriptures, and to him is attributed the merit of adding, perhaps adopting from some of the Greek Grammarians, the comma-point or *subdistinctio* and the colon-point or *media distinctio*. About the time of Jerome, points began to be used in manuscripts; but it does not appear, that any thing approaching to the present system, was adopted earlier than the ninth century.

Notwithstanding the claim for Jerome, that he attended to the pointing of the Scriptures, a more consistent tale of the first step taken towards this end, is as follows; that in the fifth century, to assist the clergy in reading the New Testament in public worship, and to obviate the inconveniences and mistakes, to which the earlier fathers had been subject, Euthalius, first a Deacon of the church at Alexandria, and afterwards Bishop of Sulca in Egypt, divided the text of the New Testament into lines; and in such a way that each line terminated, where a pause was to be made: the following, taken from the epistle of St. Paul to Titus, is an example of this mode of pointing;

THAT THE AGED MEN BE SOBER
GRAVE
TEMPERATE
SOUND IN FAITH
IN LOVE
THE AGED WOMEN LIKEWISE
IN BEHAVIOUR AS BECOME THE HOLINESS
NOT FALSE ACCUSERS
NOT GIVING TOO MUCH WINE
TEACHERS OF GOOD THINGS⁵

An examination of the above passage, so divided into lines, and the consideration that, from various causes, after-copyists might write several divisions in the same line, suggest the idea, that in such a case they adopted some mark, to distinguish the several divisions; hence might arise the introduction of at least one point.⁶

Aristotle treated of the period, not as a sign but as a reality.⁷ Cicero also treated of the period, not as a sign but as a reality:⁸ he also spoke of the colon as a member of a sentence, and of a comma as a fragment, under the name of *incisum*.⁹ Quintilian treated the period, colon, and *incisum* or comma as realities, and not as points.¹⁰

Cicero spoke of pointing [*interpungendi*]; and it has been said that he intended thereby to speak of certain marks, used to distinguish one word from another; but an examination of what he says in his work entitled, "De Claris Oratoribus," leads to the inference, that by pointing, he meant certain signs or points, which were used to distinguish the numbers, feet, or measures, in which studied oratorical compositions were framed for the sake of harmony, and that he did not intend any

points, used to mark or to point out periods, colons, or commas *as such*; if this opinion is correct, the points of Cicero would answer to the marks or bars, which denote the rests and measures in modern written music.^{11 12}

Seneca said, that when he wrote he was accustomed to interpoint:¹³ but quoting him on the authority of Ainsworth, I do not now venture an opinion as to what he intended by that phrase.

There certainly is a great difference between the use of marks for distinguishing word from word, or distinguishing rests and measures, and the use of points for pointing out the several members and fragments of a period: in inscriptions (fac simile copies of which are given in the Gentleman's Magazine, for February, 1841) on Roman Altars, found in Britain, are certain marks, evidently points, and used for other purposes, than merely to distinguish word from word.

Beyond what Cicero, Quintilian, and Seneca have said,—the inscriptions on the altars,—that St. Jerome was a Roman and attended to the pointing of the Vulgate edition of the Scriptures,—and what is stated by comparatively modern Grammarians, I have, in relation to the Art of Pointing, learned nothing of the practice of ancient Latin Authors: it may however be reasonably inferred, that if they did not in any way lead, they perhaps followed the Grecian Grammarians.

This brief account of the Art of Pointing in ancient times, is far from being satisfactory; some of the dates and statements are not, apparently, reconcileable with each other; and an examination of ancient manuscripts by some scholar would, perhaps, lead to a version different in many particulars.

SECTION THE SECOND.

The History of the Art of Pointing in the earlier stages of the Art of Printing, and its progress to its present state.

In the earliest printed works, which have come under my notice, only the period-point and the colon-point were made use of; but the interrogative-point was soon added.

Whoever introduced the several points, it seems that a *full-point*, a point called *come*, answering to our colon-point, a point called *virgil* answering to our comma-point, the *parenthesis-points* and *interrogative-point*, were used at the close of the fourteenth, or beginning of the fifteenth century. In a work entitled *Typographia* or the *Printer's Instructor*, by J. Johnson, printer, published in 1824, reference is made to a printed book, which is, probably on insufficient grounds, attributed to Wynkyn de Worde: from this latter work, so attributed to De Worde, the following extract upon the *craft of poynting* thus speaks;—"there be five manner of points and divisions most used among cunning men; the which if they be well used, make the sentence very light and easy to be understood, both to the reader and hearer: and they be these, virgil,—come,—parenthesis,—plain point,—interrogative." The extract then goes on;—"seeing we (as we would to God every preacher would do) have kept our rules, both in English and Latin, what need we, seeing our own be sufficient, to put any other examples." The quotation proceeds to describe the form and explain the several offices of the five points:—the virgil is thus described; "it is a slend-

er stroke leaning forward, betokening a little short rest, without any perfectness yet of sentence": this description of a virgil makes it answer to our comma-point, and the French Grammarians yet retain the name; the comma-point being by them named *virgule*.—of the *come* the quotation thus speaks;—"a come is with two tittles betokening a longer rest, and the sentence is yet unperfect, or else if it be perfect, there cometh more after belonging to it; the which more cannot be perfect by itself, without at the least somewhat of it that goeth afore"; this description of the *come* makes it answer nearly to our colon and semi-colon-points, and it will be referred to, when the colon and its point are treated upon.¹⁴

The first notice, which I have taken of the *semi-colon-point* is in a work, printed in 1605.

Of the *note of exclamation* the first I find printed, was in 1618.

The earliest use of the *dash*, that I have seen, was in the year 1662: it was then named the break, and served to denote an interruption, or an abrupt breaking off, in the midst of a period; subsequently it has been diverted from its primary use, and by some writers made to serve, without distinction, for the colon, semi-colon, and comma points, and even the parenthesis-points.

In the middle of the last century, I find a point distinct from the parenthesis-point, to which was given the name of *parathesis*; the form of which is commonly called brackets; the fragment which it points out will hereafter be treated of.

The summary of the matter appears to me to be, that at the introduction of printing about 1445, only two

points, answering to our full-point and colon-point, were used,—that within half a century from that time, the comma, parenthesis, and interrogative points, were added,—that before the year 1660, all the points now in use, except the dash and parathesis, had become not uncommon,—that the dash under the name of break was then coming into use,—and that even now the parathesis is seldom used, and under that name is hardly known.

I come also to this conclusion, yet without speaking very confidently, that in the earlier ages of printing, something like a system of pointing was observed;¹⁵ but that for the past two centuries, there are not two authors to be found, who have observed the same system, and perhaps not one author, even in the same work, who is consistent throughout.

I also judge that in a great number, perhaps the greater number, of works printed during the past two centuries, the practice has been to leave the pointing mainly to the printer.

And I will conclude this section by saying, that I believe the historical part of it to be correct, as far as it goes,—that additions may yet be made to it,—and that although my opinions have been formed only on a part of the evidence, I have every reason to believe that *that* part is a fair sample of the whole.

SECTION THE THIRD.

Of periods, colons, semi-colons, commas, parentheses, paratheses, and interrogations, and their points; also of the interjection and its point, sometimes called the note of admiration, and the point or mark first called the break and now the dash.

In this essay periods, colons, semi-colons, commas, interrogatives, parentheses, and paratheses, are carefully spoken of as being things distinct from full-points, colon-points, semi-colon-points, comma-points, interrogative-points or notes of interrogation, parenthesis-points, and parathesis-points: it will be contended that the period, colon, semi-colon, comma, interrogation, parenthesis, and parathesis are realities, and that the points, which in common parlance, bear those names are merely notes, marks, or signs; their several offices being *only* to point out where the realities, of which they are the indices, exist: to the authorities of Vossius, Lowth, and Campbell, before given on this head, that of the authors of the Port Royal Latin Grammar may be added; in it, under the head of Punctuation, the period, colon, and comma, are treated as realities.

It is not to be expected that every one, into whose hands this essay may fall, will understand the distinction between the *primary* and *secondary* meanings of a word; and as the present essay cannot be fairly understood by any, who do not understand such a distinction, a definition or rather an illustration of it, shall be attempted. The *primary* meaning of a word is *that* very idea, and *that* idea alone, which, upon the first use of the word, was intended to be by it conveyed to

the mind of a hearer or reader:—the word *lion*, in its primary signification, means a well known animal; but it has several secondary meanings: sometimes a brave man is called a lion; sometimes lion-hearted: by way of derision a cowardly fellow is sometimes called a lion: the lions at the Tower of London were once considered wonderful sights; thence, in a secondary meaning, any thing in a place, animate or inanimate, worthy of a sight is termed one of the lions of the place:—the word *ear*, in its primary signification is the name of the outward organ of hearing, but in a secondary sense it means the attention of the mind;—

Give ear, O Israel!

The mode of using a word in a secondary sense is called by Rhetoricians a *trope*.¹⁶

In many instances it has happened that the primary meaning of the word is altogether abandoned, forgotten, or become obsolete, and the word is never used but in a secondary meaning:—this is the case, in the English language, with the words colon, semi-colon, and comma; in the place of their signifying members or fragments of a period, they only raise in the minds of many men the ideas of certain points or marks; hence error and confusion have arisen, and hence the source of some of the difficulties of pointing! It may be thought that the distinction, between the members and fragments of a period and their signs or points, is dwelt upon to satiety; but, it is the ground-work of the system: the *sign* of a reality can never be *the* reality; as an hieroglyphic of the sun cannot be the sun, nor the letters SUN, that luminary; so a *full-point* is not a *period*, or a *comma-point* a *comma*.

Whenever the words period, colon, semi-colon, comma,

interrogative, parenthesis, and parathesis, are used in this work, they will be used in their several primary, and not in their secondary meanings.

THE PERIOD.

Periods, colons, and semi-colons, have so intimate a relation to each other, that in English composition, what is one and what is another, cannot be well understood, until what is said of all has been gone through.

“With respect to *Periods*, it would be neither practically useful, nor even suitable to the present object, to enter into an examination of the different senses in which various authors have employed the word. A technical term may allowably be employed, in a scientific work, in any sense not very remote from common usage, (especially when common usage is not uniform and invariable, in the meaning affixed to it,) provided it be clearly defined, and the definition strictly adhered to. By a Period, then, is to be understood in this place, any sentence, whether simple or complex, which is so framed that the Grammatical construction will not admit of a close, before the end of it; in which, in short, the meaning remains suspended, as it were, till the whole is finished.”¹⁷ The foregoing quotation is from Archbishop Whateley’s *Elements of Rhetoric*, and the liberty he there allows, will in this work be taken with the period: although it has been the usage with Grammarians and Rhetoricians, only to consider *that* a period, which consists of two or more members, a sentence of only one member will be regarded as a period in English composition; this

liberty is the rather taken, because Vossius allows that a period may be monoclonic, or consist only of one member.¹⁸ The words sentence and period are also treated in this work as being synonymous.¹⁹

Dr. Valpy in his *Elegantiae Latinæ* defines a period and gives instructions for its formation; of his chapter upon its structure, great use will be made.²⁰

The word period is derived from the Greek; the Greek word being rendered, a period or perfect sentence, a circuit, a comprisal, a joining without interruption, a cycle, a return or revolution as that of a planet.²¹

The point denoting a sentence or period and that it has reached its close, is sometimes called a full-point, sometimes a full-stop, and sometimes a period.

The period, in English composition, may be thus described;—*its beginning and end are divided by one or more words; and although the beginning and the end are so divided, they are yet so connected, or have such a mutual dependence, that a reader or hearer, as he reads or listens, is aware, because he has not found those things expressed, which preceding words have led him to expect, that he has not arrived at the end.*

A period is never perfect, when the mind of the reader or the hearer is brought to a rest at any part, before the period is actually ended.

Lucius Mummius destroyed Corinth.

This is an example of a period of only one member: the mind cannot rest at either of the words *Mummius* or *destroyed*, without perceiving that the sense is not complete.

Lucius Mummius, because he was ignorant, destroyed Corinth.

This is an example of a period with one fragment or

comma ;—the words, *because he was ignorant*, form a fragment, and this fragment by itself would convey no meaning ;—stop at the word *ignorant*, the mind makes not a rest, it looks for something more.

Lucius Mummius, because he was ignorant and illiterate, destroyed Corinth.

The words *and illiterate* form another fragment.

If as much, as Alexander excelled other commanders in warlike bravery, he had surpassed them in the virtue of temperance, he would not more have commanded the veneration of posterity, than he did the love, the respect, and the subjection of his people.

In this period, the mind having been prepared by the initiative phrase, *if as much*, to expect something more, it cannot come to a satisfied rest, until the word *people* has been attained.

The truth or beauty of a thing is sometimes better understood, nay even discovered, by contrast ; therefore to make this matter of the period yet clearer, the difference between a perfect period and a loose period shall be set forth.

Lucius Mummius destroyed Corinth, because he was ignorant and illiterate.

This is a loose period ; for when we have read or heard the word *Corinth*, the proposition is apparently complete ; the mind is satisfied ; there is not one preceding word, which intimates that the period was not finished, and before it can be proceeded with, the mind has to take up the subject a second time. Dr. Whateley, now Archbishop of Dublin, in his work on rhetoric, describes a loose sentence, as follows ;—“ a loose sentence is any, whose construction will allow of a stop, so as to form a perfect sentence at one or more places, before we

arrive at the end" : he gives the following example of a very loose sentence ;—²²

We came to our journey's end, at last, with no small difficulty, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and bad weather.

In this example there are no less than five commas or fragments ; at the end of any one of which the sentence might have terminated,—have satisfied the mind,—and yet have been grammatically correct. Loose sentences fatigue the mind : in one of them it once, twice, or thrice, comes to a rest ; but behold ! without any previous notice, again has it to take up the subject ; and in a very loose sentence, over and over again. Now the quotation last before given, only wants a different arrangement of its commas or fragments (the very same words only being used) to make pleasant to the ear and mind that, which was before tiresome :

At last, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and in bad weather, we came, with no small difficulty to our journey's end.

In this form, stop where you will, until you have reached the end, the sense is not complete and the mind cannot be satisfied.²³

In stating what a period ought to be, there is no intention of asserting or recommending, that compositions in English should be framed only in exact periods ; the nature of our language, to some extent, forbids this : to write in periods was much easier in Greek and Latin than it is in English. On this head I cannot do better than give at length, a part of what Dr. Whateley says ; —“ Periods, or sentences nearly approaching to Periods, have certainly, when other things are equal, the advantage in point of Energy. An unexpected continuation of a sentence which the reader had supposed to be con-

the relative pronouns, as partaking of the nature of conjunction. It is by these parts, less significant in themselves, that the more significant parts, particularly the members of complex sentences, are knit together. The frequent recurrence, therefore, of such feeble supplements, cannot fail to prove tiresome, especially in pieces wherein an enlivened and animated diction might naturally be expected. But no where hath simplicity in the expression a better effect in invigorating the sentiments, than in poetical description on interesting subjects. Consider the song composed by Moses, on occasion of the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and you will find, that part of the effect produced by that noble hymn is justly imputable to the simple, the abrupt, the rapid manner adopted in the composition. I shall produce only two verses for a specimen. "The enemy said, I will pursue; I will overtake; I will divide the spoil; my revenge shall be satiated upon them: I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them; thou blewest with thy breath; the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters." This is the figure which the Greek rhetoricians call *asyndeton*,²⁶ and to which they ascribe a wonderful efficacy. It ought to be observed that the natural connexion of the particulars mentioned is both close and manifest; and it is this consideration which entirely supersedes the artificial signs of that connexion, such as conjunctions and relatives. Our translators (who, it must be acknowledged, are not often chargeable with this fault) have injured one passage in endeavouring to mend it. Literally rendered it stands thus: "Thou sentest forth thy wrath: it consumed them as stubble." These two simple sentences have appeared to them too much de-

tached. For this reason, they have injudiciously combined them into one complex sentence, by inserting the relative *which*, and thereby weakened the expression: "Thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble." They have also thought fit sometimes to add the conjunction *and* when it was not necessary, and might well have been spared.

"If any one perceives not the difference, and consequently, is not satisfied of the truth of this doctrine, let him make the following experiment on the song now under review. Let him transcribe it by himself, carefully inserting conjunctions and relatives, in every place which will admit them in a consistency with the sense, and then let him try the effect of the whole. If, after all, he is not convinced, I know no argument in nature that can weigh with him. For this is one of those cases in which the decision of every man's own taste must be final with regard to himself."²⁷

Although there has not been any intention in this essay, of trenching on the office of a rhetorician, any further than is necessary to elucidate the punctuation of sentences, it is suggested that in the formation of a sentence, the use of pronouns and other words of reference to other sentences, should as much as possible be avoided.

Perhaps to the arrangement or misarrangement of the members and fragments of periods and sentences, is it to be attributed, that we are pleased with some public speakers, and displeased with others:—two preachers shall have the very same ideas upon the very same subject, shall both use much the same words upon the same subject, and both shall actually convey their ideas to the minds of their hearers; now one pleases us

nouns of the period or member to be illustrated, are frequently and must sometimes be necessarily used : thence it follows, that every colon may be reduced to the form of a simple or monoclonic period, by converting its pronouns into the nouns they severally represent, and by repeating or supplying any word, which is not expressed, but only understood.

One criterion of a colon is, that it always has its own verb expressed or understood.²⁹

Example of a sentence of three members ;—

Geology has claims upon the regard of all cultivated and pious minds : it leads us to study *that*, which God has made our earthly abode, in its present state, filled with monuments of past conditions, and presages, I venture to think, of the future : it leads us into some acquaintance with a magnificent part of Jehovah's will, according to which he worketh all things.

The following is an example of a sentence consisting of five members, in the form of a climax ;—

We can do nothing well till we act with one accord : we can have no accord in action till we agree together in heart : we cannot agree without a supernatural influence : we cannot have a supernatural influence unless we pray for it : we cannot pray acceptably without repentance and confession.

A mistake pointed out, sometimes teaches as much as a perfect work : the printer of William Cobbett's English Grammar, in the very sentence in which Cobbett professes to shew what a colon is, has placed a full-point, where a colon-point ought to have been inserted : this may be seen in the following extract ;—"The colon which is written thus (:) is next to the full-point in requiring a complete sense to the words. It is indeed often used when the sense is complete, and there is something still behind, which tends to make the sense fuller or clearer : " now Mr. Cobbett's second period is a member, which tends to make the sense of the

former fuller or clearer ; therefore, according to Mr. Cobbett's own rule, it ought to have been divided from the former by a colon-point, or at least a semi-colon-point, and not by a full-point.

MORE PARTICULARLY OF THE SEMI-COLON.

The semi-colon of English composition is only a variety of the colon : like that it has its own verb expressed or understood:—the distinction between them may be drawn as follows ;—the colon takes more nearly than the semi-colon the form of a period, and words of reference are more frequently used in the semi-colon, than in the colon.

The semi-colon appears in two forms : the first is this ; *if one member contains a word or words, which lead the reader to expect another member, and another member, having a word or words of reference to the former does immediately follow, the latter member is a semi-colon.*

The second form is, *when one member is followed by another, and the latter means nothing or effects nothing, without calling in aid the preceding member, then the latter member is a semi-colon.*

An example of the semi-colon in the first form will now follow ;—

As the desire of approbation, when it works according to reason, improves a man in everything that is laudable ; so nothing is more destructive to him, when he is governed by vanity and folly.

Examples of the semi-colon in the second form ;—

Under the general head of conversation for the improvement of the mind, we may rank the practice of disputing ; that is, when two or more persons appear to have different sentiments, and maintain their own, or oppose the other's opinion, in alternate discourse, by some methods of argument.

Disputes may sometimes be successful to search out truth,—sometimes effectual to maintain truth and convince the mistaken ; but at other times a dispute is a mere scene of battle, in order to victory and vain triumph.

what is there said of Lowth and Campbell and the quotations from their works, might be added as illustrative members (colons) and marked with colon-points; but such a sentence would be found of inconvenient length and not readily intelligible; therefore the proposition is three times repeated, and to each repetition different illustrative members have been added.

The practice of marking colons with full points, leads to an inconvenience similar to that spoken of in note 6, in regard to modern versions of the Scriptures being divided into verses; viz., by this practice many passages are looked upon as distinct, when they ought to be considered as united; consequently the interpretation is likely to be injured.

Periods, colons, and semi-colons, having been debated at great length, what is a colon or semi-colon will be summed up in a general description:—a colon or semi-colon is *the more which cometh after*, used only to illustrate what goeth immediately before; the *more which cometh after* and *that which goeth before* forming a period.³⁰

THE COMMA.

In treating of the colon the object was to shew, that it is a member of a sentence; but it is not so with the comma: *a comma* is only a fragment of a sentence.

Comma is a Greek word which is variously translated;—segment; fragment; a slice; a piece cut off or cut out; part of a period; a short division of a period; a part of a member in a sentence; the smallest part or fragment of a sentence; a mark; a sign; the smallest part in

music.³¹ Cicero says, what the Greeks called *commas* and *colons*, the Latins incorrectly termed *incisa* and *membra*.³²

A comma may be thus defined;—*it is a fragment, consisting of one or more words, conveying by itself no intelligible idea to the mind, and generally may be removed from a sentence and the sentence remain sense.* The use of a comma is to qualify other words and phrases of the sentence, of which it is a fragment.

Vossius says, that with the ancient rhetoricians the comma was accounted an imperfect sentence, or a part of a period composed *without* a verb :³³ if, in English composition, a rule can be laid down that a comma has not its verb, to such a rule there must be some exceptions.

As a further help to the student some rules upon the *comma*, mainly framed from what Bishop Lowth says upon the comma, and what Lindley Murray says upon the *comma-point*, shall be given.

Two or more nouns occurring in the same construction, are severally commas and are usually pointed ; as,

Reason, virtue, answer one great aim.

The husband, wife, and children, suffered extremely.

Two or more adjectives belonging to the same substantive, are likewise commas and are usually pointed ; as,

Plain, honest truth.

David was brave, wise, and pious.

The most innocent pleasures are the sweetest, the most rational, the most affecting, and the most lasting.

Two or more verbs, having the same nominative case, are commas and are usually pointed ; as,

Virtue supports in adversity, moderates in prosperity.

We may advise, exhort, comfort, request, and discuss.

clapping of hands, which accompany them, instead of adding to the honors and reputations, of some men, frequently make them, what is, indeed, sometimes, intended, by their companions, objects of fun: for folks call, upon them, for speeches, and replies, and the necessity, as some fancy, of saying something, the perplexity of not knowing what to say, and the anxiety of appearing learned, deep-read, or witty, are circumstances, which are capable of making, and have made, many a man, appear ridiculous: besides, these customs, are evil customs, because they, sometimes, give a blockhead, of many words, and little sense,

One, who strikes his breast, and slaps his thighs,

As, if he's stung, by gnats, or flies,

with superficial listeners, particularly those of the fair sex, an advantage over men, of undoubted ability, to which these talking chaps, are not, justly, entitled.

The error of *high pointing* may be avoided by omitting to point some commas, or by pointing others only at one extremity: in short periods, which are so plain in themselves, that the several parts require no distinctive marks, confusion rather than perspicuity is produced, by the introduction of comma-points: confusion rather than perspicuity, is also produced in long sentences, where comma-points are unnecessarily thrust in. The difficulty with commas is not as to what is or what is not a comma, but whether they shall be marked at all, or only with one or two points.³⁴

THE PARENTHESIS AND PARATHESIS.

MORE PARTICULARLY OF THE PARENTHESIS.

Parenthesis is taken from the Greek and signifies interposition.³⁵ The Parenthesis is placed by Grammarians, as one of the five species of the figure of speech called Hyperbaton; ³⁶ the following is by some of them given as an example;—

Tityre, dum redeo (brevis est via) pasce capellas.

Translated the passage runs,

Oh Tityrus, until I return (the journey is but a short one) feed the goats.

A parenthesis is a note and ought only to be inserted in a sentence, when from its brevity, it does not distract the mind of the reader too long from the main proposition. Kett, in his *Elements of General Literature*, observes, that "the long parenthesis which so frequently occurs in the older [English] writers to the great embarrassment and perplexity of their meaning, has fallen much into disuse; and," he adds, "that it is no where to be found in the writings of Johnson."³⁷

Not unfrequently but improperly, two comma-points are substituted for the parenthesis-points:—there may be parts of a sentence which partake partly of the nature of a comma, and partly of the nature of a parenthesis; whenever there is a doubt, whether they should be marked with the one or the other of the points, the better plan will be to recast the words, and give them beyond question, the form of a comma or a parenthesis.

Sir James Burrow, approves of superadding colon and semi-colon points at the end of a parenthesis.

MORE PARTICULARLY OF THE PARATHESIS.

Sir James Burrow says that one special use of the parathesis is, "That when a Speaker is repeating, or a Writer citing the Words of *another* Person; and finds that his *adding* a single Word, or two or three Words of *his own*, will be necessary or convenient towards ascertaining any equivocal Term or Expression, or clearing up any Doubt; he puts these *added Words* of *his own*, within a PARATHESIS, if he is Writing, or lowers

the Trojan chief? wherefore am I by the fates forbidden? Had not Pallas the power to burn the Argive Fleet?

THE INTERJECTION.

What is an interjection? is it a fragment of one single word? or is it a member or a fragment of a sentence of many words? or is it merely a point? Instead of a long dissertation upon these questions, I will quote some phrases *marked* by Grammarians *with the* interjection-point, and leave my readers to form their own opinions upon the matter.

From the Port Royal Latin Grammar :—

Oh what a country!

Oh wretched me!

Oh too happy!

Alas, where is the religion and fidelity of former days!

Oh unhappy race!

O lamentable!

Ye gods!

Ye men!

Oh sacred Jupiter!

Ah me!

From the Eton Latin Grammar :—

She left the hope of the flock, alas! upon a bare rock.

What madness!

Oh the joyful day of man!

O too fortunate husbandmen, if they knew but their own happiness!

O beautiful boy! trust not too much to your beauty.

This note in its legitimate use, is expressive of astonishment, rapture, or lamentation, and other emotions of the mind; but it is often abused, and pressed by satirists and libellers into their service: one of these writers is afraid to speak out; yet he wishes to satirise or to libel a particular person; to effect this he uses words of courtesy; but he adds the dagger-like note of admiration:

The gallant admiral!

The honorable gentleman!

This pious clergyman!!

The learned civilian!!!

In such hands it may be denominated the coward's-point.

Upon another abuse of this note Blair says,—“it has become a fashion among some writers, to subjoin points of admiration to sentences, which contain nothing but simple affirmations or propositions; as if, by an affected method of pointing, they would transform them in the reader's mind into high figures of eloquence.”

THE DASH.

This mark was at first called the *break*, and its primary use was to denote that a period had broken off abruptly:

I speak in the presence and fear of the Everlasting God, that my tongue is not my own for it is the Lord's, and to be disposed of according to his pleasure, and not to speak my own words; I have been so long in prison ——— Then he was interrupted by the Judge.

In this way was this mark used in 1662.

The Dash is classed by Lindley Murray among the points: according to him it may be legitimately used, where a significant pause is required,—where a sentence

THE GENERAL CONCLUSION.

If any one yet clings to the notion that periods, colons, and semi-colons are points, and not members of periods, he is referred to the language of Cicero; "what the Greeks call *commas* and *colons*, we call *commata* [commas] and [*membra*] members."⁴⁴—Quintilian distinctly says, "A member is contained within certain measures; torn from the body it can effect nothing. *Oh skilful men*, is perfect; but, removed from the body, it has no strength, as a hand, foot, or head by itself: when then is the body [period] perfect, even when the conclusion is attained?"⁴⁵

Many writers have no other intention in using any points, than to mark certain pauses, and some masters even of authority, have condescended to teach,—“at a comma stop while you can count *one*,—at a semi-colon *two*,—at a colon *three*,—at a period *four* :”—looking at the imperfection of language, perhaps no better method can be found of teaching infants what pauses are; in the practice of grown up life such rules are of little or no value; the proper length of the several pauses depending upon the nature of the work, and the style of the reader or speaker.

In this work, very little notice has been taken of the rules laid down by Grammarians for pointing; this has been done under a conviction, that a knowledge of what a period is,—that a knowledge that colons, semi-colons, and interrogatives, are members of a complex period,—that a knowledge of what is a comma, a parenthesis, or a parathesis,—added to a knowledge of the uses of the

note of interjection and the dash, will enable a writer, consistently, and correctly, to point his own work.

From the opinion of the ancient anonymous author, "if points be well used they make the sentence very light and easy to be understood, both to the reader and the hearer,"—not an iota ought to be abstracted;—but yet it may confidently be said, that if a sentence requires *one* point to make plain the author's meaning,—or if by pointing, it can be made to bear more meanings than one, it is a faulty sentence; any attempt to mend it can only be cobbling, and the only remedy is wholly to recast it:—"it was not," said Augustus Matthæi, "until the great influx of strangers to Alexandria impaired the purity of the Greek Language, that the art of pointing became an object with the learned." A sentence which *absolutely* requires points, in order to be understood, or by the use of different points, or by the use of the same points in different places, can be made to bear more than one meaning, is deserving of little more consideration than a common puzzle.⁴⁶ Lord Kames remarks, "that if it shall be thought that a defect in perspicuity is easily supplied by accurate punctuation, the answer is, that punctuation may remove a difficulty, but will never produce that peculiar beauty, which is perceived, when the sense comes out clearly and distinctly, by means of a happy arrangement."⁴⁷ Punctuation may make, but can never, *altogether* remove, an ambiguity: it is often not only a question *what* point ought to be used, but where it ought to be used, and if such a question can be raised upon any sentence, it cannot but be an ambiguous one; a happier arrangement of the words, not an alteration in the pointing, can in such a case, be the only effectual remedy.⁴⁸ The language of Blair

periods, be attributed to their comparative ignorance of the use of points; this ignorance compelling them, in order that their meaning might not be liable to be misunderstood, to be careful in the arrangement of their words. The excellence of the ancients in the composition of a period, is no reason for the disuse of points: it is an authority against the abuse of words; but it would be absurd (as Matthæi observes) not to avail ourselves of the use of points, because they were unknown to the ancients.

In drawing to a conclusion I will add that hitherto, English Grammarians have obscurely treated of Punctuation: some of them because they have used the same words to express different meanings; Bishop Lowth for instance, uses the words *colons* and *commas*, as well to convey the idea of members and fragments of sentences, as of their points: others because they only used the words in a secondary meaning; Lindley Murray, for instance, uses the words *colon* and *comma* only to signify *points*. Punctuation is to the generality of men a matter of obscurity, and many attempt to conceal their ignorance under the phrase, *Punctuation is merely a matter of taste*: whether a writer shall compile his work in longer or shorter sentences, whether he shall illustrate the principal proposition of a sentence, by one or by many illustrative clauses, may be a *matter of taste*; but he cannot change their nature by pointing: the great use of pointing is to facilitate the reading of a composition.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

IN any thing relating to English Grammar, the authority of Bishop Lowth cannot pass unnoticed : should any one think too little notice has been taken of this author in the body of this work, it will perhaps be thought that the defect is remedied by giving all that he says upon the subject.

The Edition which has been used is a corrected one, published by Dodsley and Cadell in 1776 ; to a point and a letter has the work been followed :—

PUNCTUATION.

PUNCTUATION is the art of marking in writing the several pauses, or rests, between sentences, and the parts of sent-

ation double of the Colon ; the Colon is double of the Semicolon ; and the Semicolon is double of the Comma. So that they are in the same proportion to one another, as the Semibref, the Minim, the Crotchet, and the Quaver, in Music. The precise quantity, or duration, of each Pause or Note cannot be defined ; for that varies with the Time ; and both in Discourse and Music the same Composition may be rehearsed in a quicker or a slower Time : but in Music the proportion between the Notes remains ever the same ; and in Discourse, if the doctrine of Punctuation were exact, the proportion between the Pauses would be ever invariable.

The Points then being designed to express the Pauses, which depend on the different degrees of connexion between Sentences, and between their principal constructive parts ; in order to understand the meaning of the Points, and to know how to apply them properly, we must consider the nature of a Sentence, as divided into its principal constructive parts ; and the degrees of connexion between those parts, upon which such division of it depends.

To begin with the least of these principal constructive parts, the Comma. In order more clearly to determine the proper application of the Point which marks it, we must distinguish between an Imperfect Phrase, a Simple Sentence, and a Compound Sentence.

An Imperfect Phrase contains no assertion, or does not amount to a Proposition or Sentence.

A Simple Sentence has but one Subject, and one finite Verb.

A Compound Sentence has more than one Subject, or one finite Verb, either expressed or understood ; or it consists of two or more simple Sentences connected together.

In a Sentence the Subject and the Verb may be each of them accompanied with several Adjuncts; as the Object, the End, the Circumstances of Time, Place, Manner, and the like: and the Subject or Verb may be either immediately connected with them, or mediately; that is, by being connected with some thing, which is connected with some other; and so on.

If the several Adjuncts affect the Subject or the Verb in a different manner, they are only so many Imperfect Phrases; and the Sentence is Simple.

A Simple Sentence admits of no Point, by which it may be divided, or distinguished into parts.

If the several Adjuncts affect the Subject or the Verb in the same manner, they may be resolved into so many Simple Sentences: the Sentence then becomes Compounded, and it must be divided into its parts by Points.

For, if there are several Subjects belonging in the same manner to one Verb, or several Verbs belonging in the same manner to one Subject, the Subjects and Verbs are still to be accounted equal in number: for every Verb must have its Subject, and every Subject its Verb; and every one of the Subjects, or Verbs, should or may have its point of distinction.

EXAMPLES:

"The passion for praise produces excellent effects in women of sense."—*Addison*, Spect. No. 78.

In this Sentence *passion* is the Subject, and *produces* the Verb: each of which is accompanied and connected with its Adjuncts. The Subject is not passion in general, but a particular passion determined by its Adjunct of Specification, as we may call it; the passion *for praise*. So

Copulative or Disjunctive, are not separated by a Point : but when there are more than two, or where the Conjunction is understood, they must be distinguished by a Comma.

Simple Members connected by Relatives, and Comparatives, are for the most part distinguished by a Comma : but when the Members are short in Comparative Sentences ; and when two Members are closely connected by a Relative, restraining the general notion of the Antecedent to a particular sense ; the pause becomes almost insensible, and the Comma is better omitted.

EXAMPLES :

" Raptures, transports, and extasies are the rewards which they confer : sighs and tears, prayers and broken hearts, are the offerings which are paid to them."—*Addison*, *ibid*.

" Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust ;
Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust."—*Pope*.

" What is sweeter than honey ? and what is stronger than a lion ?"

A circumstance of importance, though no more than an Imperfect Phrase, may be set off with a Comma on each side, to give it greater force and distinction.

EXAMPLE :

" The principle may be defective or faulty ; but the consequences it produces are so good, that, for the benefit of mankind, it ought not to be extinguished."—*Addison*, *ibid*.

A Member of a Sentence, whether Simple or Compounded, that requires a greater pause than a Comma, yet does not of itself make a complete Sentence, but is followed by something closely depending on it, may be distinguished by a Semicolon.

EXAMPLE :

" But as this passion for admiration, when it works according to

reason, improves the beautiful part of our species in every thing that is laudable; so nothing is more destructive to them, when it is governed by vanity and folly."—*Addison*, *ibid*.

Here the whole Sentence is divided into two parts by the Semicolon; each of which parts is a Compounded Member, divided into its Simple Members by the Comma.

A Member of a Sentence, whether Simple or Compounded, which of itself would make a complete Sentence, and so requires a greater pause than a Semicolon, yet is followed by an additional part making a more full and perfect Sense, may be distinguished by a Colon.

EXAMPLE:

"Were all books reduced to their quintessence, many a bulky author would make his appearance in a penny paper: there would be scarce any such thing in nature as a folio: the works of an age would be contained on a few shelves: not to mention millions of volumes, that would be utterly annihilated."—*Addison*, *Spect. No. 124*.

Here the whole Sentence is divided into four parts by Colons: the first and last of which are Compounded Members, each divided by a Comma; the second and third are Simple Members.

When a Semicolon has preceded, and a greater pause is still necessary; a Colon may be employed, though the Sentence be incomplete.

The Colon is also commonly used, when an Example, or a Speech, is introduced.

When a Sentence is so far perfectly finished, as not to be connected in construction with the following Sentence, it is marked with a Period.

In all cases, the proportion of the several Points in respect to one another is rather to be regarded, than their supposed precise quantity, or proper office, when taken separately.

Is this the confidence you gave me?
 Lean on it safely, not a *period*
 Shall be unsaid for me.—*Milton*.

Syllogism is made use of to discover a fallacy cunningly wrapt up in a smooth *period*.—*Locke*.

For the assistance of memories, the first word of every *period* in every page may be written in distinct colours.—*Watts*.

COLON, n. s. A point (:) used to mark a pause greater than that of a comma, and less than that of a period. Its use is not very exactly fixed; nor is it very necessary, being confounded by most with the semicolon. It was used, before punctuation was refined, to mark almost any sense less than a period. To apply it properly, we should place it, perhaps, only where the sense is continued without dependence of grammar or construction; as,

I love him, I despise him: I have long ceased to trust, but shall never forbear to succour him.

SEMICOLON, n. s. Half a colon; a point made thus (;) to note a greater pause than that of a comma.

COMMA, n. s. The point which notes the distinction of clauses and order of construction in the sentence: marked thus (,)

Commas and points they set exactly right.—*Pope*.

PARENTHESIS, n. s. A sentence so included in another sentence, as that it may be taken out, without injuring the sense of that which encloses it, being commonly marked thus, ()

In vain is my person excepted by a *parenthesis* of words, when so many are armed against me with swords.—*King Charles*.

In his Indian relations, are contained strange and incredible accounts; he is seldom mentioned without a derogatory *parenthesis*, in any author.—*Brown*.

Thou shalt be seen,
 Tho' with some short *parenthesis* between,
 High on the throne of wit.—*Dryden*.

Don't suffer every occasional thought to carry you away into a long parenthesis, and thus stretch out your discourse, and divert you from the point in hand.—*Wall's Logick*.

INTERROGATION, n. s. [*interrogation*, Fr. *interrogatio*, Lat.]

1. The act of questioning.
2. A question put; an inquiry.
3. A note that marks a question: thus (?) as,
Does Job serve God for nought?

INTERROGATIVE, adj. [*interrogatif*, Fr. *interrogativus*, Lat.] Denoting a question; expressed in a questionary form of words.

INTERROGATIVE, n. s. A pronoun used in asking questions: as

Who? What? Which? Whether?

INTERJECTION, n. s. [*interjection*, Fr. *interjectio*, Lat.] A part of speech that discovers the mind to be seized or affected with some passion: such as are in English,

O! Alas! Ah!—*Clarke's Latin Grammar*.

Their wild natural notes, when they would express their passions, are at the best but like natural *interjections*, to discover their passions or impressions.—*Hales' Origin of Mankind*.

To BREAK, v. a. pret. I broke or brake; part. pass. broke, or broken, [Saxon.]

To stop; to make cease.

Break their talk, mistress Quickly; my kinsman shall speak for himself.—*Shakspeare*.

BREAK, n. s. [from the verb.]

A pause; an interruption.

A line drawn, noting that the sense is suspended.

All modern trash is
Set forth with num'rous *breaks* and dashes.—*Swift*.

To DASH, v. a. [The etymology of this word, in any of its senses, is very doubtful.]

DASH, n. s. [From the verb.] A mark in writing: a line ———, to note a pause, or omission.

could not find it there;—Dr. Dibdin kindly answered a letter to me on the subject:—upon consideration I come to the conclusion that Johnson is not of sufficient authority to attribute the work to Wynkyn de Worde, and that some error may have crept into his statement. Dr. Dibdin says, “in the absence of the book it is impossible to pronounce an accurate opinion upon the type. Wynkyn de Worde is not unlikely to have been the printer, as he printed a great many grammatical works, and Jodocus Badius Ascensius, the director of the Lyons press, was among the most celebrated Grammarians and Editors of ancient classics of the day.” Without passing an opinion on the subject, I will give what Johnson says upon the subject, and the extract itself, *verbatim*, leaving every reader to form his own opinion on the matter.

“ASCENSUS DECLYNONS WITH PLAYNE EXPOSITOR.

Without date, place, or printer's name. Quarto.

“The above is a head Title, which occurs on sign. A; but the work is without Title-page, Date, Printer's name, or Device; and it is ascribed to Wynkyn de Worde from a peculiar type which is found in the *Ortus Vocabularum*, by the same Printer. It extends to n in sixes; after which are an Epilogue, and “address to the young learners to consider diligently the rules of pointing,” &c. The following is an amusing extract containing the ancient method of Punctuation:—

“OF THE CRAFT OF POYNTING.

“Ther be fve maner pontys, and diuisions most vside with cunning men: the which, if they be wel vsid, make the sentens very light, and esy to vnderstond both to the rede, & the herer, & they be these: *virgil*, come, parenthesis, playnt poynt, and interrogatif. A *virgil* is a sclender stryke: lenyng forwarde thiswyse, be tokynyng a lytyl, short rest without any perfetnes yet of sentens: as betwene the fve poyntis a fore rehersed. A come is with tway titlis thiswyse: betokynyng a lenger rest: and the sentens yet ether is vnperfet: or els, if it

be perfet : ther cummith more after, longyng to it : the which more comynly can not be perfect by itself without at the lest summat of it : that gothe a fore. A parenthesis is with tway crokyd virgils : as an olde mone, & a neu hely to hely : the whiche be set theton afore the begynnyng, and thetother after the latyr ende of a clause : comyng within another clause : that may be perfet : thof the clause, so comyng betwene : wer away and therefore it is sowndyne comynly a note lower, than the vttir clause. yf the sentens cannot be perfet without the ynnere clause, then stede of the first crokyde virgil a streght virgil wol do very wel : and stede of the later must nedis be a come. A playne poynt is with won titill thiswyse, & it cumeth after the ende of al the whole sentens betokinyng a longe rest. An interrogatif is with tway titils ; the vpper rysyng this wyse ? & it cumeth after the ende of a whole reason : wheryn ther is sum question axside, the whiche ende of the reson, tryyng as it were for an answere : risyth vpwarde. we haue made these rulis in englishe : by cause they be as profitable, and necessary to be kepte in euery mother tunge, as in latin. Sethyn we (as we wolde to god : euery precher wolde do) haue kepte owre rulis bothe in owre englishe, and latyn : what nede we, sethyn owre own be sufficient vnogh : to put any other exemplis."



No. V.

A judicious friend, who has perused my proof sheets, suggests that the examples in the body of the work, are not sufficiently numerous : to remedy this defect, extracts, from different authors, are copied *to a letter and to a point*, and in juxtaposition the same extracts are placed, pointed in accordance with the principles contended for.

Before the work of an author is quoted as an authority for pointing, we ought to know that he attended to the pointing of some one edition of that work, and that *that* edition has been followed in the one we make use of : the names of the authors of the following quotations, are *only* added to shew that the extracts have been collected from many different quarters :—

pensated by the faculty of rumination. The sheep, deer, and ox tribe are without fore teeth in the upper jaw. These ruminate. The horse and ass are furnished with teeth in the upper jaw, and do not ruminate. In the former class the grass and hay descend into the stomach nearly in the state in which they are cropped from the pasture or gathered from the bundle. In the stomach they are softened by the gastric juice, which in these animals is unusually copious.—*Paley*.

The pleasantest part of a man's life is generally that which passes in courtship, provided his passion be sincere, and the party beloved kind with discretion. Love, desire, hope, all the pleasing motions of the soul rise in the pursuit.—*Addison*.

—mute

The camel labours with the heaviest load,
And the wolf dies in silence,—not bestow'd
In vain should such example be; if they,
Things of ignoble or of savage mood,
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
May temper it to bear,—it is but for a day.—*Byron*.

Were women admitted to plead in courts of judicature, I am persuaded they would carry the eloquence of the bar to greater heights than it has yet arrived at. If any one doubt this, let him but be present at those debates which frequently arise among the ladies of the British fishery.—*Addison*.

Swift alluding, in a letter, to the frequent instances of a broken correspondence after a long absence, gives the

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He is an immortal being, that has but two marks of a man about him, upright stature, and the power of playing the fool, which a monkey has not.

He is an immortal being, that would lose none of its most darling delights, if he were a brute in the mire; but would lose them all, if he were an angel in heaven.

It is certain, therefore, that he desires not to be there: And if he not so much as desires it now, how can he ever hope it, when his day of dissipation is over? and if no hope—what is our Man of Pleasure? A man of distraction and despair to-morrow.—*Young.*

LAWYERS.

I oft have heard him say, how he admir'd
Men of your large profession, that could speak
To every cause, and things meer contraries,
Till they were hoarse again; yet all be law;
That with most quick agility could turn,
And return, make knots and undo them,
Give fork'd council, take provoking gold
On either hand and put it up.—*Ben Jonson.*

Common swearing, if it have any serious meaning at all, argues in man a perpetual distrust of his own reputation, and is an acknowledgment that he thinks his bare word not to be worthy of credit. And it is so far from adorning and filling a man's discourse, that it makes it look swollen and bloated, and more bold and blustering than becomes persons of genteel and good breeding.—*Tillotson.*

Almost all the parts of our bodies require some ex-

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has been her own physician with some success, imagines she could be yours with the same. Would to God you was within her reach. She would, I believe, prescribe a great deal of the *medicina animi*, without having recourse to the *books of Tresmegistus*.—Pope is now in my library with me, and writes to the world, to the present and to future ages, whilst I begin this letter, which he is to finish to you. What good he will do to mankind I know not; this comfort he may be sure of, he cannot do less than you have done before him.—*Bolingbroke*.

She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek.—*Shakspeare*.

The *grande monde* worship a sort of idol, which daily creates men by a kind of manufactory operation. This *idol* (a tailor) is placed in the highest parts of the house on an altar erected about three feet; he is shewn in the posture of a Persian Emperor, sitting on a *superficies*, with his legs interwoven under him. This god had a *goose* for his ensign; whence it is that some learned men pretend to deduce his original from *Jupiter Capitolinus*.—*Swift*.

I remember,
For many years ago I pass'd this road,
There was a foot-way all along the fields
By the brook-side—'tis gone—and that dark cleft!
To me it does not seem to wear the face
Which then it did.—*Wordsworth*.

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this character is chiefly used in the Old and New Testaments.

"A quotation " ". Two inverted commas are generally placed at the beginning of a phrase or a passage, which is quoted or transcribed from the speaker or author in his own words, and two commas in their direct position, are placed at the conclusion ; as,

"The proper study of mankind is man."

"An Index or Hand  points out a remarkable passage, or something that requires particular attention.

"A Brace } is used in poetry at the end of a triplet or three lines, which have the same rhyme. In prose, braces are also used to connect a number of words with one common term, and are introduced to prevent a repetition in writing or printing.

"An Asterisk or star * directs the reader to some note in the margin, or at the bottom of the page. Two or three asterisks generally denote the omission of some letters in a word, or of some bold or indelicate expression, or some defect in the manuscript.

"A dash — is often used elliptically, when some letters in a word, or some words are omitted : as, 'The k—g,' for 'the king.' In the place of an obscene or blasphemous word, a dash is commonly substituted."



No. VIII.

List of Authors, any of whose works have, in the compilation of this Essay, been in any way made use of (ex-

cepting for quotations used as examples) or referred to, and the Titles of many of the Works :—

AINSWORTH, ROBERT, a learned English grammarian, born 1660. *Thesaurus Linguae Latinæ*; 4to edition, 1772; edited by Patrick.

ARISTOTLE. *Aristotelis Rhetorica ex Recensione Immanuelis Bekkeri*; Berlin, 1831.

ARISTOPHANES of Byzantium, the founder of the Alexandrine school of criticism, was born B.C. about 240: only a small part of his works remain:—quoted on the authority of Vossius.

BLAIR, HUGH, D.D., F.R.S., Ed., one of the Ministers of the High Church, and Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh. *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*.

BRENAN, JUSTIN. *Composition and Punctuation* familiarly explained for those who have neglected the Study of Grammar; third edition.

BURROW, SIR JAMES, Knight, F.R.S., and F.S.A., Master of the Crown Office, and among the legal profession a well-known Reporter. *A Few Thoughts upon Pointing and some other Helps towards Perspicuity of Expression*, added by way of Appendix to the first volume of his Reports of the Decisions of the Court of King's Bench upon Settlement Cases; London, 1768.

N.B.—Sir James afterwards enlarged *The Thoughts upon Pointing*, and published them as an *Essay on Punctuation*, entitled, "*De Ratione et usu Interpungendi*:" this Essay I have not met with.

CAMPBELL, GEORGE, D.D., a minister of the Scotch Church, born 1719. *Philosophy of Rhetoric*.

CHAMBERS' Cyclopaedia.

VALPY, EDWARD REV., Master of the Grammar School, Norwich. *Elegantiae Latinae*, or Rules and Exercises illustrative of elegant Latin Style; third edition.

VERGARA. Mentioned on the authority of the Port Royal Latin Grammar.

VOSSIUS, GERHARDUS JOANNES, born 1577. *Commentariorum Rhetoricorum Sive Oratoriarum Institutionum, Libri Sex*: quint. edit. 1681. Marburgi.

WARD, DR., one of the Gresham Professors: mentioned on the authority of Chambers' and Rees' Cyclopedias; in Rees, his work is thus quoted, Vol. i. Lect. 22.

WHATELEY, RICHARD, D.D., sometime Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, afterwards Principal of St. Alban's Hall, and now Archbishop of Dublin. *Elements of Rhetoric*; third edition, 1830. *Elements of Logic*; fourth edition, 1831.

Most, if not all, of our cyclopedias, and many of our grammars, say something of punctuation. Chambers speaks of Buffier, a French author, who wrote upon the subject.

No. IX.

In founts of letters, in which the number of the letter *m* is 3000, and the number of the letter *e* is 12000, the proportions of the common points have been as follows:—

	One Hundred Years ago.	Fifty Years ago.	At the present time.
Comma-points.....	4000.....	5000.....	4500
Semicolon-points....	1000.....	1000.....	800
Colon-points.....	1000.....	1000.....	600
Full-points.....	2000.....	2500.....	2000
Interrogative-Points,	500.....	400.....	200
Notes of Admiration,	300.....	400.....	150

NOTES.

(¹) Alio autem fine tractabimus de periodis, colis, com-
matis, quàm solent Grammaticorum filii, Hi non aliâ de
causâ ea considerant, quàm ut monstretur ratio bene in-
terpungendi. At Rhetores, quia orationem ea reddunt
suavem, ac perspicuam.—*Vossius*, cap. iii. de periodo,
s. 1.

(²) Lowth's Introduction to English Grammar: edit-
ion of 1775. This extract is copied to a *letter* and a *point*,
as in the original.

(³) Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric; book iii. c. iii.
part ii.

(⁴) Port Royal Latin Grammar, c. xv: Of Punctu-
ation.

(⁵) These divisions were called *Stichoi*; and at the
end of each manuscript it was usual to specify the numb-

scribimus," (Epistolæ, 40,) is Seneca's phrase; and the editor adds the following note:—"notis post singula verba positis; neque enim alia adhuc interpunctio usurpata antiquis."

(14) See Appendix, No. 4.

(15) The earliest printers were oftentimes the authors, translators, or editors of the books they printed: each one cut his own types, made his own ink, set up the types, read his own proofs, and worked off the sheets.—The Guide to Trade: The Printer: Charles Knight.

(16) The subject of tropes, or the use of words in secondary meanings, being important in composition, the following extract from Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, is given:—

"At the first rise of language, men would begin with giving names to the different objects which they discerned or thought of. This nomenclature would, at the beginning, be very narrow. According as men's ideas multiplied, and their acquaintance with objects increased, their stock of names and words would increase also. But to the infinite variety of objects and ideas, no language is adequate. No language is so copious, as to have a separate word for every separate idea. Men naturally sought to abridge this labour of multiplying words *in infinitum*; and in order to lay less burden on their memories, made one word, which they had already appropriated to a certain idea or object, stand also for some other idea or object, between which and the primary one, they found, or fancied, some relation. Thus the preposition, *in*, was originally invented to express the circumstance

of place : 'The man was killed *in* the wood.' In progress of time, words were wanted to express men's being connected with certain conditions of fortune, or certain situations of mind, and some resemblance or analogy being fancied between these, and the place of bodies, the word, *in*, was employed to express men's being so circumstanced ; as, one's being *in* health, or *in* sickness, *in* prosperity, or *in* adversity, *in* joy, or *in* grief, *in* doubt, or *in* danger, or *in* safety. Here we see this preposition, *in*, plainly assuming a tropical signification, or carried off from its original meaning, to signify something else which relates to, or resembles it.

" Tropes of this kind abound in all languages ; and are plainly owing to the want of proper words. The operations of the mind and affections, in particular, are, in most languages, described by words taken from sensible objects. The reason is plain. The names of sensible objects were, in all languages, the words most early introduced ; and were, by degrees, extended to those mental objects of which men had more obscure conceptions, and to which they found it more difficult to assign distinct names. They borrowed, therefore, the name of some sensible idea, where their imagination found some affinity. Thus we speak of a *piercing* judgment, and a *clear* head ; a *soft* or a *hard* heart ; a *rough* or a *smooth* behaviour. We say, *inflamed* by anger, *warmed* by love, *swelled* with pride, *melted* into grief : and these are almost the only significant words which we have for such ideas. * * * *

" When we design to intimate the period at which a state enjoyed most reputation or glory, it were easy to employ the proper words for expressing this ; but as this is readily connected, in our imagination, with the flour-

ing to *Mev.* *TE* que, atque, and.—Port Royal Greek Grammar, book vi., c. xiii.

(25) With this quotation from Dr. Whateley no liberties have been taken; the punctuation has been exactly followed.

(26) *Asyndeton*: without a conjunction; want of a conjunction.

(27) Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, book iii., c. iii., of complex periods; 11th edition. With this quotation no liberties have been taken; the punctuation of the original is exactly followed.

(28) *Κεῖλον*; membrum ut *pes*, *lacertus*, *crus*; *pars periodi*: *Hederici Lexicon*.—Colon, a member of a sentence: *Ainsworth's Dictionary*.—*Membra quædam, quæ Græci κῶλα vocant*: *Cicero ad Marc. Brutum Orator*.

(29) Colon iisdem [*Rhetoribus*] est sententia perfecta; sed relata;—sive est *pars periodi suo fulta verbo*: *Vossius Rhet. Instit. lib. iv., de periodo*.

(30) Cicero considered that period to be the best, which consists of four members. *Constat enim ille ambitus et plena comprehensio è quatuor ferè partibus, quæ membra dicimus, ut et aures impleat, et ne brevior sit, quàm satis sit, neque longior*: *Ad Marc. Brutum Orator*.—*Quintilian* says, a period has at least two members; most commonly it has four; but frequently contains more. *Habet periodus membra minimum duo: medius numerus videtur quatuor: sed recipit frequenter et plura*.

Modus ei a Cicerone aut quatuor senariis versibus, aut ipsius spiritus modo terminatur. Præstare debet, ut sensum concludat; sit aperta, ut intelligi possit: non immodica, ut memoria contineri: Quintiliani de Inst. Orat., lib. ix., c. iv. de compositione.—Vossius allows a period to consist of two, three, or four colons. Periodus πολυκῶλος [composita] δίκῶλος [bimembris], vel τρικῶλος [trimembris], vel τετράκῶλος [quadrimembris].—Rhet. Instit., lib. iv.

(³¹) Κομμα; segmen, fragmentum, incisum, pars periodi, nota, signum; Hederici Lexicon.—Pars minima et orationis fragmentum; Schrevelii Lexicon.—A piece cut off or cut out, a slice, an incisum, a short division of a period; Donovan's Greek and English Lexicon.—A part of a member in a period marked thus (,); Ainsworth's Latin and English Dictionary; 4to.

(³²) Cùm Græci κόμματα, et κῶλα nomenclant, nos non rectè *incisa*, et *membra* dicamus.—Cicero: *Ad. Marc. Brutum Orator*.

(³³) His [rhetoribus] commata est sententia imperfecta, sive pars periodi composita sine verbo.—Vossius, lib. iv., c. iii.

(³⁴) It seems that some have regarded clauses either as colons or commas, according to their length: Vossius says, "Interim illud non ignorandum, sæpe et commata colorum, et cola commatum magnitudinem habere:"—he adds, Demetrius and Hermogenes teach that the colon and comma differ only in length: that some think that a clause which contains not more than seven, others eight

to the first volume of the first edition of his Settlement Cases. Since the greater part of the text has been in the press, I have stumbled on the following notice: "The Thoughts upon Pointing have been much enlarged and improved; and published as an essay on punctuation, entitled '*De ratione et usu interpungendi*.' Sold by Edward Brooke, Bell Yard; price 1s. 6d."

(³⁹) Blair's Lectures on Philosophy and Belles Lettres: Lect. xvii.; Figures of Speech. The rest of what Blair says is so much to the purpose, that it ought to have formed a part of the text; the omission shall be supplied in this place:—"Nothing has a worse effect than the frequent and unseasonable use of them [notes of exclamation]. Raw juvenile writers imagine, that, by pouring them forth often, they render their compositions warm and animated. Whereas quite the contrary follows. They render it frigid to excess. When an author is always calling upon us to enter into transports which he has said nothing to inspire, we are both disgusted and enraged at him. He raises no sympathy, for he gives us no passion of his own, in which we can take part. He gives us words, and not passion; and, of course, can raise no passion, unless that of indignation. Hence I am inclined to think, *he* was not much mistaken, who said, that when, on looking into a book, he found the pages thick bespangled with the point which is called, 'Punctum admirationis,' he judged this to be a sufficient reason for his laying it aside. And indeed were it not for the help of this 'punctum admirationis,' with which many writers of the rapturous kind so much abound, one would be often at a loss to discover, whether or not it was exclamation which they aimed at."

(40) Cobbett's Grammar of the English Language.—Letter xiv., p. 156; Points and Marks.

(41) One of the most determined advocates of the dash is a writer named Justin Brennan.—See Brennan, in Appendix, No. VIII.

(42) Blair's Lectures on Philosophy and Belles Lettres: Lecture xvii.; Figures of Speech.

(43) See Appendix, No. VIII.; Ward, Dr.

(44) Quæ κῶματα Græci vocant, nos incisa dicimus: κῶλον illi, nos membrum.—Cicero: Ad Marc. Brutum Orator.

(45) *Membrum* autem est sensus numeris conclusus, sed a toto corpore abruptus, et per se nihil efficiens: id enim, *O callidos homines!* perfectum est; at remotum a cæteris, vim non habet: ut per se manus, et pes, et caput: et, *O rem excogitatam! o ingenia metuenda!* Quando ergo incipit corpus esse? cum venit extrema conclusio.—*Quinct.* lib. ix., c. iv.

(46) As illustrations of the assertion, that the *sentences* referred to in this part of the text are deserving of little more consideration than a common puzzle, the following examples are given;—

Ibis; redibis; nunquam per bella peribis.

Ibis; redibis nunquam; per bella peribis.

meaning,—or if, by pointing, it can be made to bear more meanings than one, it is a *faulty* sentence, which cannot be properly mended by pointing or re-pointing; but only by recasting it:—the use of points is to facilitate the reading of a composition.

(47) Henry Home, Lord Kames, Elements of Criticism.

(48) “The original records of acts of parliament, verbose deeds of conveyance, or marriage settlements, have not a single stop from beginning to end.”—Sir James Burrow. The practice of not pointing records and deeds still continues. A professional friend tells me that in one of the reports on the public records, punctuation is spoken of, but I have not found it.

(49) Blair’s Lectures on Philosophy and Belles Lettres. Lecture xi. ; Structure of Sentences.

